UNITED NATIONS

Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/COP(4)/INF.7
23 November 2000

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Fourth session
Bonn, 11-22 December 2000

# REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Note by the secretariat

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to decision 16/COP.3, entitled work programme of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), paragraph 3 requests the secretariat to facilitate the convening of at least one inter-sessional Bureau meeting of the Committee for the review of decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties and other related matters regarding the work of the Committee, especially the planning and organization of the next session of the Committee.

2. Pursuant to that decision, the secretariat organized a CST Bureau meeting in Bonn, Germany, from 4 to 6 October 2000. The agenda of that meeting and the list of documents under consideration are contained in annexes I and II; the list of participants is in annex III. Bureau members were informed that the documents under consideration were non-official copies, pending the receipt of official documents from Geneva.

3. Following the opening of the meeting, the President of the CST and members of the secretariat welcomed members of the CST Bureau and experts attending the meeting. The agenda of work for the CST Bureau meeting was presented and adopted.

## II. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE CST AND THE ROSTER OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS

### Review of the CST agenda

4. Following a review of the agenda for the fourth session of the CST, Bureau members expressed concern that there was insufficient time allocated for the review of national reports submitted by country Parties by the CST, and recommended that an additional half-day be allocated to this topic.

5. Bureau members were informed by the secretariat about the synthesis report for CST members (ICCD/COP(4)/CST/5), which summarizes the scientific and technical information contained in national reports submitted to COP 3 and COP 4.

Review of the roster of independent experts

6. The secretariat introduced the topic of a review of the roster of independent experts by referring to decision 15/COP.3, noting that the roster is available electronically, and that an amended list of disciplines has been compiled. With regard to para. 5 of the decision, the secretariat indicated that information on the number of individuals accessing the roster electronically can be determined, but that their reason for doing so cannot be identified. The secretariat noted its request to the Parties to assist in the provision of this type of information, but indicated that no responses have been received from the Parties to date. Various options, as outlined in ICCD/COP(4)/5/Add.1, to ensure an efficient maintenance of the information in the roster were introduced by the secretariat for future consideration of the CST.

7. Concern was expressed by Bureau members about a continued gender imbalance, under-representation of certain disciplines as well as the civil society on the roster. Bureau members noted that the synthesis prepared by the secretariat and presented in ICCD/COP(4)/5/Add.1 was useful in highlighting this imbalance to Parties, which would allow Parties to respond appropriately. The need to sensitize Parties about the roster was noted, in order to promote the closer integration of national expertise into the development and implementation of NAPs, and to promote the inclusion of representatives from civil society in the roster.

## III. SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF EXISTING NETWORKS

8. Pursuant to para. 2 of decision 13/COP.3, the secretariat presented draft terms of reference for Phase Two of the survey and evaluation, based on the Phase One report submitted by UNEP on behalf of its consortium members, as well as comments received from Parties. The draft terms of reference were reviewed, amended and adopted by Bureau members, and will be included as an annex in ICCD/COP(4)/CST/3.

9. The representative from UNEP provided an update on the status of activities under Phase One, noting the financial constraints which have delayed the consortium's intent to contact all members who participated in Phase One in order to finalize those activities.

10. Bureau members considered the advantages and disadvantages of various options related to the tendering process for contractors to carry out Phase Two activities, and decided the most timely and productive means for carrying out Phase Two activities was to request UNEP and its consortium to continue their work. Therefore, UNEP on behalf of its consortium members, was invited to submit to the secretariat by 10 November 2000 the proposed membership of the consortium together with a costed proposal and work plan needed to carry out Phase Two activities.

## IV. REPORT OF THE AD HOC PANELS ON TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Traditional knowledge

11. Pursuant to decision 12/COP.3, the Chairman of the ad hoc Panel on Traditional Knowledge presented the Panel's report (ICCD/COP(4)/CST/2) to the Bureau members. As well, the Chairman demonstrated the contents of a CD-ROM on traditional knowledge which had been prepared by IPOGEA in Italy. A number of comments on the ad hoc Panel's report were noted by the Chairman. Bureau members noted the importance of facilitating coordination between current initiatives on traditional knowledge that have been undertaken by various institutions, including the establishment of a functional network of such institutions as recommended by the Panel. Bureau members agreed that further work on traditional

knowledge in dryland areas was needed, in particular to develop appropriate indicators on such knowledge, its application at a regional level, and the maintenance and promotion of databases on traditional knowledge.

Early warning systems

12. The report of the ad hoc Panel on Early Warning Systems (ICCD/COP(4)/CST/4) was presented by the Chairman of the Panel and a number of comments on the report were received by Bureau members. The importance of analysing vulnerability to drought and desertification, and linking traditional knowledge and early warning systems was highlighted, especially in the area of the collection of data, the dissemination of information, and measuring for drought preparedness.

## V. DISCUSSION ON FUTURE CST WORK PROGRAMME WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UNCCD, AND REFLECTION, BROAD PROJECTION AND TENDENCIES OF THE CST POSSIBLE PROGRAMME IN COMING YEARS

13. Given the inter-linkages between these two topics, Bureau members agreed to discuss them as one agenda item. Bureau members requested the secretariat to prepare a synthesis of all CST activities. They agreed on the need to better integrate the activities of the CST into those of the UNCCD at national, subregional and regional levels.

14. The secretariat introduced two documents for the information of Bureau members. These documents, noted below, describe additional initiatives in which the secretariat is currently involved:

(a) Assessment of the status of land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas: dryland degradation assessment (LADA) and the millennium ecosystem assessment (MEA) (ICCD/COP(4)/INF.6);

(b) Review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies (ICCD/COP(4)/6).

15. Bureau members noted with appreciation the work undertaken by the secretariat with regard to these initiatives, and requested the secretariat to pursue those initiatives. The CST may wish to propose criteria to identify areas and regions where in-depth studies/assessments should be conducted in the future.

16. The secretariat also provided a demonstration of its updated Web site to CST Bureau members, who took note with appreciation of the improved UNCCD Web site.

17. A full discussion on the future work of the CST was held, with a number of recommendations being made to the CST 4 and COP 4, as follows:

(a) Members of the ad hoc Panel on Early Warning Systems should be re-appointed to continue its work, in particular focusing on facilitating national and subregional networks on the prediction of drought and monitoring desertification. The Chairman of the ad hoc Panel was requested to clearly define the objectives and a programme of work for Phase Two of work for presentation at the fourth session of the CST;

(b) Given that the ad hoc Panel on Traditional Knowledge has been active for two years, Bureau members agreed that, while continuing work on traditional knowledge in dryland areas was needed, innovative means of doing so (other than via an ad hoc panel) would be appropriate. The Bureau members supported the proposal from the Panel on traditional knowledge to establish a network of

institutions relevant in that field. The Chairman of the Panel was requested to clearly define the objectives and programme of work of such a network. The Bureau members also took note with satisfaction of the imminent launching of a database on traditional knowledge by Italy;

(c) Recognizing the importance of continuing work on previous CST initiatives on benchmarks and indicators, impact indicators should be tested on a pilot project basis in several countries which are well-advanced in the development of their National Action Programmes. The importance of ensuring the availability of adequate technical and financial resources to undertake the testing of impact indicators was noted;

(d) Work on Phase Two of the survey and evaluation of existing networks would be initiated, as per the Bureau's previous discussions;

(e) With regard to longer-term programming of work for the CST, the development of a joint programme of work with other environmental conventions undertaken by the secretariat should be strongly encouraged, in particular with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Ramsar Convention. The CST may wish to consider future initiatives in examining possible global benefits which could be achieved through the development of joint work programmes;

(f) Given the importance of the strengthening of capacity and education, the CST Bureau members recommend to the COP to encourage Parties to support and reinforce the training of specialists in the domain of desertification in a holistic manner.

## VI. CONCLUSION

18. Bureau members requested the secretariat to ensure that the present Chairman of the CST, or alternatively one of the Vice-Chairs, be present at COP 4 in order to present the Bureau's report.

19. The Chairman made a verbal summary of the three-day meeting of the CST Bureau, and thanked Bureau members and the secretariat for their input into ensuring a successful and productive meeting.

Annex I

**AGENDA**

4-6 October 2000, Bonn, Germany
Friedrich Ebert Foundation

**Wednesday, 4 October 2000**

0930-0945 Opening statement by CST Chairman, Mr Moses Munemo

0945-1000 Welcoming remarks by a representative of the UNCCD secretariat

1000-1030 Adoption of programme of work and the agenda of Bureau meeting

1045-1130 Topic one: Review of the agenda of the CST 4 and the Roster of Independent Experts

1130-1230 Discussion of topic one; comments, remarks and views. Summary by the Chairman

1400-1430 Topic two: Survey and evaluation of existing networks

1430-1530 Discussion of topic two; comments, remarks and views.

1545-1730 Continuation of discussion of topic two. Summary by the Chairman

**Thursday, 5 October 2000**

0900-1030 Topic three: Report of ad hoc Panel meeting on Traditional Knowledge and report on ad hoc Panel on Early Warning Systems

1045-1130 Discussion of topic three; comments, remarks and views. Summary by the Chairman

1130-1230 Topic four: Discussion on future CST work programme within the framework of the Convention to Combat Desertification

1400-1530 Discussion of topic four; comments, remarks and views

1545-1730 Continuation of discussion of topic four and five. Summary by the Chairman

**Friday, 6 October 2000**

0900-1030 Topic five: Reflection, broad projection and tendencies of the CST possible programme in the coming years

1045-1230 Discussion of topic five; comments, remarks and views

1400-1530 Continuation of discussion of topic five. Summary by the Chairman

1545-1615 Closing the meeting

Annex II

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

1. Tentative agenda of work for the CST Bureau Meeting
2. ICCD/COP(4)/CST/1: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. ICCD/COP(4)/CST/2: Traditional Knowledge: Report of the ad hoc Panel
4. ICCD/COP(4)/CST/3: Survey and Evaluation of Existing Networks, Institutions, Agencies and Bodies
5. ICCD/COP(4)/CST/4: Early Warning Systems: Report of the ad hoc Panel
6. ICCD/COP(4)/5/Add.1: Committee on Science and Technology: Maintenance of the Roster of Experts
7. ICCD/COP(4)/INF.6: Assessment of the Status of Land Degradation in Arid, Semi-arid and Dry sub-humid Areas
8. Promotion and Strengthening of Relationships with Other Relevant Conventions
9. Survey and Evaluation of Existing Networks: Executive Summary
10. Survey and Evaluation of Existing Networks: Final Report Update
11. Draft Terms of Reference and Proposed Organization of Work to be Undertaken on the Second Phase of the Survey and Evaluation of Existing Networks
12. User guide for CST/CCD Network Survey Database of Contacted Institutions, Agencies and Bodies

Annex III

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

1. Mr. Moses D. Munemo, President of CST, Zimbabwe
2. Mr. Carlos Valarezo, Vice-Chair of CST, Ecuador
3. Dr. Ola Smith, Vice-Chair of the CST, Canada
4. Dr. Kazuhiko Takeuchi, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Panel on Early Warning Systems, Japan
5. Dr. Pietro Laureano, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Panel on Traditional Knowledge, Italy
6. Mr. Timo Maukonen, UNEP Representative, Kenya
7. Mr. Jobo Molapo, Focal Point for SADC, Lesotho
8. Mr. Philip Baker, Observer, Canada
9. Mr. A. Cissoko, UNCCD
10. Mr. M. Candelori, UNCCD
11. Ms. J. Sheltinga, UNCCD
12. Mr. J. Frings-Naberschulte, UNCCD

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